G. L. K. SMITH PLANS MOVE IN MARYLAND

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Ex-America First State Leaders Disclaim Interest, However

Gerald L. K. Smith, one of the pre-war leaders of America First, announced yesterday in Detroit that he will "turn his attention to Maryland soon" in his latest movement to organize an America First party for the 1944 campaign.

The announcement, however, fell on sterile ground here, former State leaders of America First disclaiming either interest or participation in the Smith movement. One even denounced it as potentially "tragic."

View Of GOP Leaders

Leaders of the Republican party, against whom Mr. Smith indicated his third party would be directed, shrugged off the threat with a "let-him-come" attitude and professed assurance that an America First party wouldn't make a dent in the votes of either of the major parties.

Mr. Smith said he has discussed Maryland organization with Senator Reynolds (D., N. C.) and that Senator Reynolds has agreed to speak in Baltimore at a date to be arranged if it does not interfere with his duties as chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee.

Senator Reynolds could not be reached for comment.

Not Interested, Gwyer Says

John A. Gwyer, who was president of the Maryland branch of America First at the time of its disbandment on the day after Pearl Harbor, declared that the idea of America First never was the formation of a new political party.

"I would have no interest," he said, "in such a movement. I am not interested in any third party."

Advised that Mr. Smith said Maryland leaders of America First

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had journeyed to Philadelphia to hear him speak recently, Mr. Gwyer said he knew of no such journey.

Seen As "Tragic Thing"

"There are," he said, "no leaders of America First here because there is no America First organization. It is completely disbanded."

Mrs. Robert H. Walker, who introduced Kathleen Norris at the April, 1941, meeting of America First here and who was active in the organization declared the formation of such a party "would be a tragic thing at this time."

"I wouldn't be interested in anything like that," she emphasized.

Mrs. Walker said she is registered as a Democrat "but that doesn't mean I have to vote Democratic."

Her Current Interest

Her current interest, she said, is in the National Woman's Party, which is aiming at "the four freedoms for women." She added that the party does not nominate candidates.

The Rev. Walter M. Haushalter, another active worker in the pre-war America First organization, joined the others in declaring he knew nothing of the proposed organization in Maryland and that he would have no interest in an America First party.

"The organization was dissolved at the outbreak of the war and should remain dissolved."

Stand On Third Party

Asked if he would be opposed to any third party, he said:

"I wouldn't say that. I would have to see what the party stood for."

Mr. Smith had stated: "I have a high regard for many of the Republican leaders of the State of Maryland, and the one thing that will tempt us into a third party movement more than any other would be for the Republicans to capitulate to Willkie or Willkieism."

Levin Not Impressed

Harry O. Levin, former chairman of the State Tax Commission, who has been heading a movement for the nomination of Governor Dewey of New York for the Republican Presidential nomination, was not impressed by the anti-Willkie sentiment of Mr. Smith.

"His high regard for Republican leaders is not reciprocated here," Mr. Levin said. "I personally wouldn't get within ten miles of him or his party."

Mr. Smith also said: "We would hesitate to do anything that would split the Republican party in Maryland if that party will keep its leadership in the hands of men who are not afraid to put their own country first."

"Not Losing Any Sleep"

Paul Robertson, chairman of the Republican City Committee, said the party is not "losing any sleep over any split that Mr. Smith can cause."

"Furthermore," he said, "he won't be able to find out what candidate the Republican leaders in Maryland favor for the Republican Presidential nomination because no Republican leader would even confer with him."

H. L. Katz Comments

Harry Leeward Katz, chairman of the Maryland Federation of Republicans, added to the Robertson sentiment:

"Gerald Smith is too close to the Fascists in this country and has done too much to disrupt unity during the war to make any impression on the people of Maryland. Let him come."

Mr. Smith said no date has been set for the Maryland meeting. Republican leaders and former America Firsters joined in doubting that it ever would be set.